

ARTICLE APPENDED
ON PAGE 29NEW YORK TIMES
6 March 1986

Royal Pageantry and Parties in Morocco

By EDWARD SCHUMACHER

Special to The New York Times

MARRAKESH, Morocco, March 5 — King Hassan II, celebrating the 25th anniversary of his rule, wore a flowing white robe with the hood folded back on his head as he rode in a gold satin saddle atop a black Arabian stallion. A footman walked briskly at his side carrying a tall purple umbrella to shade the King, though there was little sun in the outer courtyard of his parapeted winter palace here.

By rows, hundreds of white-robed officials, dignitaries and tribal chiefs bowed before the advancing figure and chanted, "Allah give long life to the King." From behind rope barricades, thousands of women in colorful Arab and Berber costumes held samples of their regional wear high on sticks like scarecrows and trilled in a high, piercing tone.

"What a spectacle," said Chessy Rayner at the Ceremony of Allegiance Tuesday. "I love it. I love the way it's so big, so orderly. The Rockettes have nothing on these people."

Mrs. Rayner was one of 15 socially prominent New Yorkers and Hollywood personalities invited to the ceremonies Monday and Tuesday celebrating the anniversary of the 56-year-old King. They were invited by Gray & Company, a Washington public-relations and lobbying concern, to attract social attention to what was mostly a diplomatic event. One other head of state, King Juan Carlos of Spain, was present.

William J. Casey, Director of Central Intelligence, led a large official American delegation that included Vernon A. Walters, chief delegate to the United Nations; Charles Z. Wick, head of the United States Information Agency, and David Rockefeller. The effort was designed to show America's improved relations with Morocco, following a cooling-off after the King signed a "treaty of union" with Libya 18 months ago.

In a surprise, King Hassan awarded Mr. Casey the Order of the Throne, tying a red ribbon with the medal around Mr. Casey's neck in a ceremony at the palace Monday.

Morocco relies on the United States for military and economic aid that this year totals \$112 million. But the ties go much deeper in this most Western of Arab countries. Morocco was the first nation to recognize the United States when it was a fledgling. Representative Stephen J. Solarz, Democrat of Brooklyn, introduced a bill last week on Morocco's behalf to find land in Washington where a commemorative monument can be erected next year.

For the unofficial guests, it began as an expenses-paid lark organized in just two weeks. Mary McFadden, the fashion designer, had been asked by Gray representatives to put together the New York group. Maggy Louis, the wife of the fashion designer Jean Louis, organized the Los Angeles contingent.

Many were hesitant. "All of our programs are organized for the next three months, you know," said Mica Ertegun, an interior decorating partner of Mrs. Rayner. Mrs. Ertegun and her husband, Ahmet Ertegun, head of Atlantic Records, were among the unofficial contingent.

The trip turned out to be a rare glimpse into what often seemed a fairy-tale medieval kingdom.

There was the exotic: a harem. The King's wife, Lalla Latifa, who is not called the queen, and her two daughters, Princesses Hasna Asmaa and Lalla Meriem, hosted a tea for 250 guests, all women, with the King and the harem in the palace.

Of the harem, which comprises about a dozen concubines, Miss McFadden said, "You could tell who they were by their three-dimensional hair styles coiffed in a 1960's style by Alexandre, who is flown from Paris."

The women are chosen as adolescent beauties, then cloistered. However, Hassan, unlike his father, Mohammed V, is said only to have tea with them about once a month, until the palace arranges a marriage and provides a handsome royal dowry when they are in their early 20's.

After meeting the King at the tea, Pat York, wife of the actor Michael York, said: "He has a very strong, powerful presence, with eagle eyes."

"It was kind of a cozy and grand atmosphere at the same time," she added.

The King was not the only Moroccan with panache. As Mr. and Mrs. Louis were speaking with Assia Alaoui, wife of Minister of State Moulay Ahmet Alaoui, at a reception hosted by the American Embassy at the posh Mamounia Hotel, Mohammed Benaissa, the Minister of Culture, approached Mrs. Alaoui and said, "I believe in the trinity — one kiss on the hand and two on the cheeks."

The harem was hardly representative of modern Moroccan women. Mrs. Alaoui is a law professor.

Splendor was evident at the palace, with its many hidden courtyards, fountains and lemon trees. The King has nine other palaces and villas.

There was also adventure. Miss McFadden, an old Africa hand, cavorted with the snake charmers in a plaza in Marrakesh and competed with a belly dancer, performing her own African dances, at a private dinner. "It's the beat of the drums," she said.

The actor Robert Stack, accompanied by his wife, Rosmarie, and Dr. Stanley Frilack, accompanied by the actress Barbara Eden, provided much of the humor. Explaining why kaftans were a favorite purchase of the group in visits to the souk — marketplace — Mr. Stack said, "They are good Christmas gifts to hide the fat."

There was reason to worry after the many feasts of couscous, Moroccan stews, whole roasted lambs and rich sweets. But Jerry Zipkin, a favorite escort of Nancy Reagan, was not to be outdone. Referring to the gracious attentiveness of Ambassador Thomas Nassif, Mr. Zipkin said, "I asked for pistachio ice cream and got it."